

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 03038 301243Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02
SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 MCT-01 SCA-01 AID-05 OC-06
CCO-00 OMB-01 ACDA-07 /081 W
-----301250Z 050899 /46

O P 301155Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 615
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
CINCPAC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 3038

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: BHUTTO AND THE OPPOSITION DIG IN

REF: ISLAMABAD 2918,

1. THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE OPPOSITION PROBABLY NOW BELIEVE THAT ONE PHASE OF THE POST-ELECTION CONFRONTATION HAS ENDED AND BOTH ARE OBVIOUSLY DEVISING PLANS AND STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH Q THE EVOLVING POLITICAL SITUATION. THE PM IS FOLLOWING HIS TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO THE OPPOSITION BY USING THE CARROT AND STICK TREATMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, HE IS TRYING TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF A MAN MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESSING BUSINESS OF THE NATION WHETHER OR NOT THE IRRESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION WANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 03038 301243Z

2. MOST OF THE PNA LEADERS REMAIN IN JAIL AND MORE OPPOSITIONISTS ARE ARRESTED EVERY DAY. THE PM HAS GIVEN THEM AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT IF THEY ARE NOT WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON THEIR MAJOR GOAL - HOLDING NEW ELECTIONS - THEY CANNOT EXPECT HIM TO LOOSEN THE REINS. ON THE OTHER SIDE, HE HAS IMPLICITLY BUT CLEARLY OFFERED VARIOUS SWEETENERS IF THE PNA RETURNS TO THE POLITICAL MAINSTREAM.

THESE INCLUDE MORE NA SEATS, NEW PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND, IN MONDAY'S SPEECH, THE LIFTING OF THE EMERGENCY. HE PROBABLY HOPES, THROUGH SUCH TACTICS, TO DIVIDE THE OPPOSITION BY COOPTING SOME PNA LEADERS AND CAUSING DISSENSION AMONG THE REMAINDER - A STRATEGY THAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN THE PAST BUT HAS ALMOST TOTALLY FAILED SINCE ELECTION DAY.

3. THE PM HAS ALSO SOUGHT TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION, GIGHLIGHTED IN HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEECH, THAT HE IS TURNING HIS ATTENTION TO THE FUTURE AND TO SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF THE NATION. THE OPPOSITION IS WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE, HIS LINE GOES, BUT IF THEY CHOOSE TO REMAIN OUTSIDE, THE COUNTRY AND ITS FUTURE WILL WAIT FOR NEITHER MAN NOR PARTY. THE PM UNDOUBTEDLY HOPES THIS STRATEGY WILL, OVER SEVERAL MONTHS, EVENTUALLY LEAD THE OPPOSITION TO BECOME DISHEARTENED AND DIVIDED, THE GENERAL POPULACE TO GROW UNINTERESTED IN THE PNA PROGRAMS (WHICH HE WOULD EXPECT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A SOFTENING OF THE OPPOSITION LINE) AND THE NATION SLOWLY TO RETURN TO NORMALCY.

4. FOR ITS PART, THE PNA HAS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SEVERAL POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT HAS YET MADE A FINAL CHOICE. ONE POSSIBILITY IS TO EMBARK ON A POLICY OF CONTINUING CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT, HOPING THAT CIVIL UNREST WILL GROW TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THE PM WILL EVENTUALLY BE FORCED FROM POWER. UNDER THIS SCENARIO, THE PNA WOULD ENVISION A CONTINUING LOW-LEVEL PROGRAM OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE INCLUDING DAILY PROCESSIONS IN VIOLATION OF SECTION 144, AS PROOF OF THE GOVERNMENT'S IMPOTENCE AND ITS INABILITY TO CONTROL THE SITUATION. A BBC CORRESPONDENT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 03038 301243Z

TOLD IN LAHORE BY NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN THAT THE OPPOSITION IS NOW ENCOURAGING WOMEN'S PROCESSIONS AS A FURTHER ANTI-GOVERNMENT TACTIC.

5. A SECOND POSSIBILITY IS TO DECIDE TO TRY DELIBERATELY TO ESCALATE THE CONFRONTATION, INCREASE THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE AND SEEK INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. CONGEN KARACHI REPORTS THAT MANY OBSERVERS THERE NOTE THAT IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THE PNA HAS CREATED A REAL GROUNDSWELL OF SUPPORT. AMERICAN AND PAKISTANI NEWSMEN IN KARACHI SPECULATE THAT MORE VIOLENCE, LESS CONTROLLED BY THE PNA LEADERSHIP, IS NOW LIKELY. WE NOTE THAT THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A GROWING NUMBER OF BOMB EXPLOSIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY IN THE PUNJAB. ALTHOUGH AS EXPECTED THE PNA DISCLAIMS ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EXPLOSIONS, IF THEY BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF A MORE ICTIVISTS PNA STRATEGY THE PROSPECT OF A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE CONFRONTATION, ALREADY DIM AT BEST, WOULD DISAPPEAR.

6. NASRULLAH'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAHORE MARCH 29 GAVE NO

CLUES ABOUT WHICH APPROACH THE PNA WILL ADOPT. HE MERELY STATED THE PNA REJECTS BHUTTO'S DIALOGUE OFFER WHICH WAS RESTATED IN THE PM'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ADDRESS AND VOWED THE PNA WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS ITS DEMANDS. WE CANNOT PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF THE NEW PHASE IN THE CLASH BETWEEN THE PM AND THE PNA. IT IS EVIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT NEITHER SIDE IS WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON WHAT IT SEES AS FUNDAMENTAL POSITIONS - THE PNA'S DEMAND FOR A NEW ELECTION AND BHUTTO'S INSISTENCE THAT NEW ELECTIONS ARE UNACCEPTABLE. BOTH POSITIONS CONTINUE TO HARDEN, AND RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE MAY WELL THEREFORE COME ONLY AFTER THE PASSAGE OF SEVERAL MONTHS, IF THEN.

7. SINCE WE HAVE APPARENTLY ENTERED THIS NEW STAGE IN THE CONFRONTATION, THE EMBASSY WILL NO LONGER BE SENDING DAILY SITREPS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION, BUT WILL INSTEAD RESORT TO LESS FREQUENT REVIEW. WE WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO REPORT ANY IMPORTANT EVENTS AFFECTING THE POLITICAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ISLAMA 03038 301243Z

STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY.
BYROADE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 30-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ISLAMA03038
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770108-1280
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977038/aaaaagex.tel
Line Count: 141
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0f6e5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ISLAMABAD 2918
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3167222
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BHUTTO AND THE OPPOSITION DIG IN
TAGS: PINT, PK, (BHUTTO, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0f6e5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009